### RECEIVED FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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5	FIRST GENERA	AL COUNSEL'S REPORT CELA
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. 7		MUR: 6783
8		DATE COMPLAINT FILED: February 18, 2014
9 10		DATE OF NOTIFICATION: February 25, 2014 DATE ACTIVATED: July 8, 2014
11		DATE OF LAST RESPONSE: March 19, 2014
12		DATE OF EAST RESTONOE, Match 17, 2014
13		ELECTION CYCLE: 2014
14		EXPIRATION OF SOL: January 23, 2019 to
15		March 3, 2019
16 17		MUR: 6791
18		DATE COMPLAINT FILED: March 5, 2014
19		DATE OF NOTIFICATION: March 11, 2014
20	·	DATE ACTIVATED: July 8, 2014
21		DATE OF LAST RESPONSE: April 7, 2014
22		
23		ELECTION CYCLE: 2014
24		EXPIRATION OF SOL: January 23, 2019 to
25		March 3, 2019
26	COMPLADIANT.	Scott Pierce
27 28	COMPLAINANT:	Scott Pierce
29	RESPONDENTS:	Manju for Congress, Inc. and Rajeev Goel in his
30		official capacity as treasurer (MUR 6783)
31	·	Manju Goel (MUR 6783)
32		Indian Americans for Freedom, NFPC
33	·	(MURs 6783 & 6791)
34 35		Shalabh Kumar (MUR 6783)
36	RELEVANT STATUTES	52 U.S.C. § 30104(b), (g)(2) <sup>1</sup>
37	AND REGULATIONS:	52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1), (a)(7)(B)(iii), (f)
38		52 U.S.C. § 30118
39		52 U.S.C. § 30120(c)(2)
40		11 C.F.R. § 109.21
41 42		11 C.F.R. § 109.23
43 44	INTERNAL REPORTS CHECKED:	FEC Disclosure Reports
45	OTHER AGENCIES CHECKED:	Illinois State Board of Elections

On September 1, 2014, the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the "Act"), was transferred from Title 2 to new Title 52 of the United States Code.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Complaint in MUR 6783 alleges that Indian Americans for Freedom, NFPC ("IAFF"), a 501(c)(4) organization, and its founder, Shalabh Kumar, violated the Act by making in-kind contributions to the campaign of Congressional candidate Manju Goel in the form of coordinated mailings, free office space, and payments for staff salaries and other campaign expenses and that Goel and her principal campaign committee Manju for Congress ("MFC") accepted and failed to report them.<sup>2</sup> The Complaint in MUR 6791, filed by the *same* complainant, alleges that IAFF untimely filed a 48-Hour Notice of Independent Expenditures ("48-Hour Notice") and that six IAFF mailings contained disclaimers that failed to comply with the Act and the Commission's regulations.

IAFF and Kumar filed a joint response ("IAFF MUR 6783 Resp.") and Goel and MFC filed a joint response ("MFC Response") to the Complaint in MUR 6783, each denying that they violated the Act. IAFF responded to the Complaint in MUR 6791 ("IAFF MUR 6791 Resp.") by acknowledging that it untimely filed a 48-Hour Notice but denying that it violated the Commission's disclaimer regulations.

Based on the available record, we recommend that the Commission find reason to believe that IAFF made prohibited or excessive in-kind contributions in violation of 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A) or 30118(a) by republishing materials of the Goel campaign in four of its mailings and failed to include proper disclaimers in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30120(c) and 11 C.F.R. 110.11(c) as to two mailings.<sup>3</sup> We also recommend a limited investigation to determine the amount IAFF spent on the mailings at issue and to assess the adequacy of the disclaimers.

Goel, a candidate in the 8th Congressional District in Illinois, lost the March 18, 2014, primary election with 28.5% of the vote.

Because it is unclear whether IAFF was an active corporation at the time some of the mailings were distributed, see infra at page 11, we recommend that the Commission find reason to believe that IAFF made an excessive or prohibited contribution.

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The record does not, however, support the Complaint's allegation that IAFF or Kumar coordinated with MFC on these communications, or made other in-kind contributions to MFC by providing office space or other services to MFC. Therefore, we recommend that the Commission find no reason to believe as to those allegations. Finally, we recommend that the Commission dismiss the allegations that IAFF failed to timely report its independent expenditures.

### II. FACTS

IAFF incorporated in the state of Illinois on October 2, 2012, as a non-profit social welfare organization tax exempt under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.<sup>4</sup> IAFF reports its independent expenditures to the Commission on Form 5 ("IE Reports"), which is used by persons other than political committees.<sup>5</sup> Shalabh Kumar founded IAFF and served as its chairman and director until May 15, 2013, when he resigned.<sup>6</sup> In his resignation letter to the Board of Directors, posted on IAFF's website and attached to the Responses to the MUR 6783

See Letter to Commission from Alka Tyle accompanying a Form 5, Report of Independent Expenditures, 24-Hour Report ("24 Hour Notice") (Nov. 27, 2012). The Illinois Secretary of State's corporations database confirms that IAFF registered as a non-profit corporation on October 2, 2012, but it appears it was not in good standing at the time the Complaint in MUR 6783 was filed nor is it currently. IAFF also registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a Section 527 organization on September 10, 2012. Form 8871, Political Organization Notice of Section 527 Status, Indian Americans for Freedom (Sept. 10, 2012), available at the IRS website, Political Organizations database, <a href="http://forms.irs.gov/app/pod/basicSearch/s

Approximately three weeks prior to incorporating, IAFF had registered with the Commission as an independent-expenditure-only political committee, but requested termination on November 28, 2012, having reported no activity. Letter and Statement of Organization filed by IAFF (Sept. 12, 2012), <a href="http://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/152/12030883152/12030883152/12030883152/12030883152/12030954795/12030954795.pdf">http://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/195/12030954795.pdf</a>: IAFF Termination Report (Nov. 28, 2012), <a href="http://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/195/12030954795.pdf">http://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/195/12030954795.pdf</a>: IAFF filed a 24 Hour Notice on November 28, 2012, and explained in a cover letter that the IEOPC had terminated and the newly incorporated 501(c)(4) non-profit organization needed a new FEC committee identification number. See Letter to Commission from Alka Tyle (Nov. 27, 2012); see also Letter to IAFF from Reports Analysis Division, FEC, approving termination (Nov. 30, 2012), <a href="http://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/438/12330017438/12330017438/12330017438.pdf">http://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/438/12330017438.pdf</a>: The Complaint in MUR 6783 alleges that IAFF is an IEOPC that is prohibited from making direct or in-kind contributions to federal candidates or committees. Compl. at 2 (Feb. 18, 2014). Because IAFF is a Form 5 filer and not an IEOPC, we do not specifically address that allegation in MUR 6783.

<sup>6</sup> IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 1, Ex. A (Mar. 18, 2014); MFC Resp. at 1-2, Ex. B (Mar. 19, 2014).

- 1 Complaint, Kumar states that effective that day, "I will no longer be involved in the affairs of
- 2 [IAFF] due to my new responsibilities in various Republican/Conservative organizations in
- Washington DC ... "7 Kumar also stated in the letter that another individual, Brij L. Sharma,
- 4 had agreed to serve as IAFF's new Chair.
- 5 Following his stated withdrawal from IAFF, Kumar was actively involved in the
- 6 Congressional campaign of Manju Goel, a candidate in the 2014 primary election in Illinois' 8th
- 7 Congressional District. Kumar appeared with Goel and introduced her at a local Republican
- 8 party picnic where she announced her candidacy on September 8, 2013. According to the
- 9 Complaint in MUR 6783, Kumar managed the campaign's daily operations, including hiring and
- firing staff, appeared with Goel at campaign events in the district and in Washington, D.C., and
- 11 handled press inquiries for the campaign. The IAFF Response does not dispute Kumar's
- activities on behalf of the campaign, and it acknowledges his support for Goel. 10 It emphasizes,
- however, that he was acting in his capacity as a private citizen and was no longer associated with
- 14 IAFF.<sup>11</sup>
- 15 IAFF also supported Goel's election by making approximately \$267,146 in independent
- 16 expenditures in support of Goel, all reported by IAFF as financed by Vikram Aditya Kumar,

Id. Kumar reportedly represented that his new responsibilities included chairing a project to field 10 Indian-American GOP Congressional candidates. Stephen Zalusky, Goel Announces 8th Congressional Candidacy, DAILY HERALD (Sept. 9, 2013), http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20130909/news/709099904.

There, Kumar also discussed an initiative to recruit Indian American candidates to run for Congress. See video entitled "09-08-2013 Manju for Congress (Video Clip #1)" posted on YouTube by Asian Media USA on Sept. 11, 2013, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obhSzCswl0U&feature=player\_detailpage">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obhSzCswl0U&feature=player\_detailpage</a>.

<sup>9</sup> MUR 6783 Compl. at 4.

<sup>10</sup> IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Id*.

described in the MUR 6791 Complaint as Shalabh Kumar's son. 12 Among IAFF's independent

2 expenditures were \$172,501 for mailings and "flyers" distributed between January 23, 2014, and

- 3 March 3, 2014. IAFF disseminated at least six mailings expressly advocating the election of
- 4 Goel or the defeat of her opponent, Larry Kafeish, in the primary election. The specific content
- 5 of four of IAFF's mailings are discussed in detail below as they relate to the allegations in the
- 6 Complaint.

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The Complaint in MUR 6783 notes several similarities between the communications disseminated by IAFF and MFC. First, it attaches copies of two IAFF mailings and an MFC mailing that had been mailed in the Congressional District as of February 15, 2014, and alleges that the similarities in the messaging, the use of the same candidate photos and typesetting, and the fact that all were mailed using the same bulk mail permit number "demonstrate coordination between IAFF and MFC." In response, MFC states that it is unaware of any provision of the Act, and the Complaint fails to cite to any, that prohibits committees from disseminating similar campaign materials. <sup>14</sup> IAFF does not address the mailings in its MUR 6783 response.

According to IAFF's IE Report of February 12, 2014, it made two payments totaling \$40,501 to One Step Printing ("One Step") for the first of its mailings distributed on January 23 and February 5, 2014, a vendor also used by MFC throughout the campaign. And in fact, some of IAFF's mailings were distributed using the same bulk mail permit number that appears on

MUR 6791 Compl. at 1; IAFF IE Report, Amended April Quarterly Report (Apr. 18, 2014) (listing Vikram Kumar as the sole contributor to IAFF).

<sup>13</sup> MUR 6783 Compl. at 5, Ex. L.

MFC Resp. at 2.

MUR 6791 Compl. at Ex. D (showing two payments to One Step totaling \$40,501 for printing and mailings supporting Goel and distributed on the referenced dates); see MFC 2013 Year End, 2014 Pre-Primary and 2014 April Quarterly Reports, all disclosing debt and payments to One Step, totaling \$44,336 throughout the campaign for printing, postage, direct mail and t-shirts.

- 1 MFC's mailings. Further, the campaign's Post Office Box was (apparently mistakenly) used as
- 2 the return address on one of IAFF's mailings. 16
- The Complaint also asserts that MFC's campaign is headquartered out of Kumar and
- 4 IAFF's offices. Respondents acknowledge that MFC rented office space from one of Kumar's
- 5 companies.<sup>17</sup>

### III. ANALYSIS

The Complaint in MUR 6783 alleges that IAFF and Kumar improperly made a number of in-kind contributions to MFC because they are "for all practical purposes, running and financing [Goel's] campaign," including engaging in "an active mail campaign on behalf of the candidate" and in coordination with the candidate, and paying for the campaign's office space and other services. Further, the Complaint in MUR 6791 alleges that IAFF failed to timely disclose

independent expenditures and failed to include disclaimers in its communications that comply with the Commission's disclaimer regulations.<sup>19</sup>

See MUR 6783 Compl. at Ex. L and description, infra, of IAFF's mailing Best Reagan Conservative (Republican Leaders Endorsement).

MFC Resp. at 2, Ex. C; IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 1, Ex. B. IAFF appears to be located in the same office complex as MFC. IAFF lists its address in its initial 48-Hour Notice and in one of its first mailings as 363 St. Paul Blvd. in Carol Stream, Illinois, although in its later IE Reports and in another mailing it uses the address 341 St. Paul Blvd. 341, 343 and 363 St. Paul Blvd. all appear to belong to the same office complex, and the latter is the address of a group of companies owned by Kumar collectively known as the AVG group of companies. The Illinois Secretary of State record for Autotech Technologies, LP, the Kumar company from whom MFC rents space (see IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 2, Ex. B), lists its address as 343 St. Paul Blvd.; see also <a href="http://www.autotechcontrols.net/aboutus.php">http://www.autotechcontrols.net/aboutus.php</a> (stating that AVG is an "American Group" of companies that design and manufacture state of the art electronic products and listing the address of one of the companies, Autotech Controls, as 363 St. Paul Blvd., Carol Stream, Ill.).

MUR 6783 Compl. at 1-2, 4.

MUR 6791 Compl. at 1-2.

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A. There is Reason to Believe that IAFF Made an In-Kind Contribution to MFC by Republishing Goel's Campaign Materials (MUR 6783)

Under the Act, "the financing by any person of the dissemination, distribution, or republication, in whole or in part, of any broadcast or any written, graphic, or other form of campaign materials prepared by the candidate, his campaign committees, or authorized agents shall be considered an expenditure."<sup>20</sup> The republication of campaign materials prepared by a candidate's authorized committee is considered a contribution for purposes of contribution limitations and reporting responsibilities of the person making the expenditure.<sup>21</sup> In a 2003 rulemaking involving the republication provision, the Commission explained that the person financing the republication essentially "has provided something of value to the candidate [or] authorized committee."<sup>22</sup> The Commission further explained in a 2006 rulemaking that "Congress has addressed republication of campaign material through 2 U.S.C. § 441a(a)(7)(B)(iii) [(recodified at 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(7)(B)(iii))] in a context where the candidate/author generally views republication of his or her campaign material, even in part, as a benefit" and "can be reasonably construed only as for the purpose of influencing an election."<sup>23</sup> An examination of IAFF's mailings and MFC's campaign materials reveals that four of IAFF's mailings contain much of the same content, typesetting, formatting and photographs as in an MFC mailing, MFC's website, or on a website created by MFC that attacks her opponent and

<sup>52</sup> U.S.C. § 30116(a)(7)(B)(iii) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 441a(a)(7)(B)(iii)).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 109.23.

Explanation and Justification, Coordinated and Independent Expenditures, 68 Fed. Reg. 421, 442 (Jan. 3, 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Fed. Reg. at 443; Explanation and Justification, *Coordinated Communications*, 71 Fed. Reg. 33,190, 33,191 (June 8, 2006).

1	is linked to on the MFC website. <sup>24</sup>	Each of these four IAFF mailings is a single page, t	wo-sided
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- 2 piece as is the MFC mailing. We address each of the four mailings in turn and have included as
- 3 an attachment copies of them showing the parts that replicate MFC's campaign material.
- 4 Attachment 1 at 1-8. A copy of the MFC mailing is also included for convenience. *Id.* at 9-10.
- 5 First, on IAFF's Where's Larry mailer, the front contains a photo of a Virginia license
- 6 plate purporting to be Larry Kafeish's Virginia license plate. 25 This photograph appears on a
- 7 website (WhereisLarryWhoisLarry.com) that was created by MFC and linked to MFC's website.
- 8 The front also contains the same bulk mail permit as on MFC's mailing.<sup>26</sup> The back of Where's
- 9 Larry contains a large photo of Goel holding a phone a cropped version of this photo is
- 10 featured prominently on the home page of the MFC website.<sup>27</sup> Further, the following text
- 11 comprising approximately half of the back of Where's Larry is identical to the front of the MFC
- mailer, including font style and capitalization:<sup>28</sup>
- 13 Republican Manju Goel.
- Best Conservative Candidate to Retire Tammy Duckworth from Congress
- 15 Manju Goel will ...
- Champion Freedom and Limited Government
- Champion Personal Responsibility
- Champion Common-sense Household
   Fiscal Discipline in Washington, DC
  - Fiscal Discipline in Washington, DC

     Grow our Party, Bring 20K+ new voters
  - MFC's website became inaccessible in late May 2014. Screen captures of the website can be found at <a href="http://web.archive.org/web/\*/manjuforcongress.com">http://web.archive.org/web/\*/manjuforcongress.com</a>. We have also included relevant screenshots in the Voting Ballot Matters Folder.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> *Id.* at 1 and 9.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>28</sup> Id. at 2 and 9.

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1 Second, the front of the Best Reagan Conservative (Gingrich Endorsement) mailer 2 contains two photos of Goel that appear on MFC's website: the phone photo of Goel that 3 appears to be a flipped version of the photo featured prominently on the MFC website, and a photo of Goel with three supporters.<sup>29</sup> The front side also contains a headshot photo of Newt 4 5 Gingrich that is identical to one that appears on MFC's website featuring Gingrich's endorsement.<sup>30</sup> And again, the mailer contains the same bulk mail permit as on MFC's 6 7 mailing.<sup>31</sup> The back of Best Reagan Conservative (Gingrich Endorsement) features three photos of Goel, all of which appear on the MFC website.<sup>32</sup> It also features the text of an endorsement 8 9 by Gingrich with the same edits as an edited version of Gingrich's endorsement appearing on another part of MFC's website.<sup>33</sup> Finally, the back of the mailer contains the same slogan and 10 capitalization that appears on MFC mailer: "Manju [] will Grow our Party, Bring 20K+ new voters."34 12 13 Third, the front and back of the third mailing, Virginia Resident Larry Kaifesh, contains a

reproduced excerpt of a process server affidavit in a lawsuit in which the process server states

that the apartment where service was attempted reportedly had been vacant for one and a half

<sup>29</sup> Id. at 3. The unedited Gingrich endorsement appears on a "News" section of the MFC website.

<sup>30</sup> ld.

<sup>31</sup> Id. at 3 and 9.

Id. at 4.

<sup>33</sup> ld.

<sup>34</sup> Id. at 4 and 9.

- 1 months.<sup>35</sup> A PDF of the full affidavit is linked to on the MFC-created website,
- 2 WhereisLarryWhoisLarry.com, a prominent link to which is featured on MFC's website.
  - Finally, the front of the fourth mailing, Best Reagan Conservative (Republican Leaders Endorsements) is identical to the front of Best Reagan Conservative (Gingrich Endorsement) except that it lists MFC's P.O. Box as IAFF's address. The back of the fourth mailing contains the same large, cropped phone photo of Goel featured on the MFC website and the same slogan and capitalization that appears on MFC's mailing: "Manju [] will Grow our Party, Bring 20K+ new voters." In addition, it contains the same formatted endorsements and head shot photos of Gingrich and former Congressman Joe Walsh that appear on the MFC website; a formatted version with photo of an endorsement by Aaron Schock that appears on MFC's website as a handwritten note on a PDF of a two-page endorsement letter from Pete Sessions; excerpts from the Sessions endorsement letter; and an endorsement by former Reagan campaign official Don Totten appearing in a news release on the MFC website. The session of the MFC website.

The republication provisions of the Act and Commission regulations recognize the value to a candidate of a third party further disseminating material belonging to or derived from a candidate's campaign. The comparison of IAFF and MFC's materials shows that IAFF included Goel's campaign materials in its own mailers. By including MFC campaign materials in mailings expressly advocating Goel's election and the defeat of her opponent, IAFF made in-

Id. at 5-6. The lawsuit in question was a defamation lawsuit filed by Kumar against Kaifesh in November 2013, a copy of which is attached to the MUR 6783 Complaint. MUR 6783 Compl. at Ex. K.

Attachment 1 at 7.

<sup>37</sup> Id. at 8-9

<sup>38</sup> Id. at 8.

kind contributions to MFC under the republication provisions of the Act and Commission's
 regulations.

As noted, IAFF incorporated on October 2, 2012. The Illinois Secretary of State record attached to the Complaint in MUR 6783, however, shows that IAFF was not in good standing around the time the Complaint was filed in mid-February 2014 and it is not currently in good standing. IAFF's IE Reports disclose that it distributed mailings and flyers between January 23 and March 3, 2014, and that its funding came solely from Vikram Kumar. Because IAFF may not have been an active corporation at the time it financed and distributed at least some of its mailings, and given that IAFF reported its funding as originating from one individual, we recommend that the Commission find reason to believe that Indian Americans for Freedom violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A) and 30118(a) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(a)(1)(A) and 441b(a)) by making excessive or prohibited in-kind contributions to Manju for Congress.

B. There is No Reason to Believe that MFC Accepted an In-Kind Contribution from IAFF in Connection with IAFF's Mailings (MUR 6783)

A political committee may not knowingly accept contributions made in violation of the Act's contribution limitations or its prohibition against corporate contributions. <sup>40</sup> It appears that IAFF made prohibited or excessive in-kind contributions to MFC by republishing MFC's campaign material. MFC is not deemed to have accepted or received in-kind contributions, and is not required to report them, unless IAFF's mailings constitute coordinated communications. <sup>41</sup>

MUR 6783 Compl. at Ex. A.

<sup>52</sup> U.S.C. §§ 30116(f) and 30118(a) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(f) and 441b(a)).

<sup>11</sup> C.F.R. § 109.23(a). See also 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(7)(B)(i) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 441a(a)(7)(B)(i)) providing that an expenditure made by any person "in cooperation, consultation, or concert, with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, his authorized political committees or their agents" constitutes an (in-kind) contribution.

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the candidate or committee, when the communication: (1) is paid for by a person other than that candidate or authorized committee (the "payment prong"); (2) satisfies at least one of the content standards set forth in 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(c) (the "content prong"); and (3) satisfies at least one of the conduct standards set forth in 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(d) (the "conduct prong").<sup>42</sup>

A communication is coordinated with a candidate, a candidate's authorized committee, or agent of

Here, the payment prong is satisfied because IAFF, a third party, paid for the mailings. The content prong is satisfied because the four mailings constitute republished MFC campaign material and each expressly advocates Goel's election or the defeat of her opponent, Larry Kaifesh. 43

Under the conduct prong of the Commission's coordinated communications regulation, if a third party republishes campaign materials, the candidate or his authorized committee will be deemed to have engaged in coordination with that person only if: (1) the communication was created, produced, or distributed at the request or suggestion of a candidate or authorized committee, or at the suggestion of the person paying for it and the candidate or authorized committee assents ("request or suggestion" standard); (2) the candidate or authorized committee was materially involved in specific details of the communication. including its content, timing, and intended audience ("material involvement" standard); or (3) the

<sup>11</sup> C.F.R. § 109.21(a).

See 11 C.F.R. §§ 109.21(c)(2) (republication) and (3) (express advocacy). Where's Larry exhorts recipients to "Send Manju Goel to Congress from IL District 8;" Best Reagan Conservative (Gingrich Endorsement) and Best Reagan Conservative (Republican Leaders Endorsement) state "Republican Manju Goal, Best Reagan Conservative for IL 8 to Retire Tammy Duckworth from Congress" and urge recipients to "Vote March 18;" Virginia Resident Larry Kaifesh asks why "Virginia Resident Larry Kaifesh [would] Run for Congress in Illinois" and urges recipients to "Vote No on Larry Kaifesh." See 11 C.F.R. § 100.22. Each of mailings also satisfies the content standard at 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(c)(4) (public communications distributed within 90 days of an election).

Each of the above-referenced content standards apply to "public communications" which include "mass mailings" defined as mailings of more than 500 pieces of mail of an identical or similar nature within any 90 day period. 11 C.F.R. §§ 100.26 and 100.27. IAFF's mailings likely constitute public communications as the Complaint in MUR 6783 alleges the attached mailings were sent district-wide and IAFF's disclosed costs for the first two mailings total \$40,501. MUR 6783 Compl. at 4; MUR 6791 Compl. at Ex. D.

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1 communication was created after one or more substantial discussions between the person paying

- 2 for the communication and the candidate or his authorized committee or the candidate's
- 3 opponent or his authorized committee ("substantial discussion" standard).<sup>44</sup> Similarly, a
- 4 candidate or committee is not deemed to have received or accepted an in-kind contribution that
- 5 results from conduct satisfying the common vendor conduct standard unless the candidate or his
- 6 or her committee engages in conduct satisfying the request or suggestion, material involvement
- 7 or substantial discussion standards.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to alleging that the similarities between IAFF's mailings and MFC's mailing demonstrate coordination, the Complaint in MUR 6783 relies on associations and links between IAFF and MFC in broadly asserting that IAFF and MFC coordinated their activities. Most notably, the Complaint alleges that Kumar operated and managed IAFF at the same time he was significantly involved in Goel's campaign. It also asserts that the departure of Alka Tyle as a "principal staffer" from the Goel campaign to IAFF as announced by Tyle in an attached

January 6, 2014, e-mail demonstrates "staff coordination" between them. 47 The Complaint also

<sup>11</sup> C.F.R. § 109.21(d)(6) (citing 109.21(d)(1)-(3)). The material involvement and substantial discussion standards of the conduct prong are not satisfied "if the information material to the creation, production, or distribution of the communication was obtained from a publicly available source." 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(d)(2) and (3). See also Explanation and Justification, Coordinated Communications, 71 Fed. Reg. 33,190, 33,205 (June 8, 2006) (explaining that "[u]nder the new safe harbor, a communication created with information found . . . on a candidate's or political party's Web site, or learned from a public campaign speech . . . is not a coordinated communication"). However, to qualify for the safe harbor for the use of publicly available information, the person or organization paying for the communication "bears the burden of showing that the information used in creating, producing or distributing the communication was obtained from a publicly available source." Id.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(b)(2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> MUR 6783 Compl. at 1, 3-4.

<sup>1</sup>d. at 2, Ex. E.

1 alleges that MFC's campaign operated out of the same offices as IAFF and Kumar's

2 companies.<sup>48</sup>

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The Complaint's broad coordination allegation is intertwined with more specific allegations concerning possible Kumar or IAFF in-kind contributions to MFC. Nevertheless, Respondents deny the broad coordination allegation by refuting that Kumar was simultaneously involved in IAFF and Goel's campaign, pointing to his May 15, 2013, resignation letter to the IAFF Board of Directors. Next, they maintain that Tyle was not a paid MFC staffer but served as a volunteer for MFC in the early stages of the campaign. IAFF asserts Tyle took time off before she joined IAFF and states that her use of the MFC e-mail account to announce her departure was a "mistake," implying she had left MFC sometime before January 2014. For its part, MFC claims to have no relationship with IAFF and does not know where IAFF operates.

The Complaint sets out an array of circumstantial facts that suggest opportunities for coordination between IAFF and MFC. But without more, the available facts do not satisfy, or raise a sufficient inference, that the request or suggestion, substantial discussion or material involvement conduct standards have been met.

Both IAFF and MFC state that Kumar was not involved in IAFF's operations following his May 15, 2013, resignation letter, seven months before IAFF began its independent expenditure campaign. Other than Kumar's former stewardship of IAFF, the Complaint provides

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Id, at 1-2, Ex. C.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 1, Ex. A; MFC Resp. at 1-2, Ex. B.

IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 1-2; MFC Resp. at 3.

<sup>1</sup>AFF MUR 6783 Resp. at 2.

MFC Resp. at 2.

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- 1 no information that Kumar continued his involvement in IAFF and we are aware of none.
- 2 Further, in Kumar's resignation letter, he states that someone else assumed the chairmanship of
- 3 IAFF. As for Alka Tyle, it appears from IAFF's IE Reports covering activity in the prior
- 4 election cycle that she worked for IAFF as late as January 2013 before volunteering for the
- 5 campaign and then returning to IAFF as of January 6, 2014.<sup>53</sup> Other than Tyle's movement
- 6 between the entities, the Complaint does not provide information, and we are aware of none, that
- 7 suggests she served as a conduit of information such that any conduct standard at 11 C.F.R.
- 8 § 109.21(d)(1), (2) or (3) is satisfied. Similarly, the fact that IAFF apparently operated from or
- 9 at least maintained a mailing address at, the same office complex in which MFC rented space
- suggests there could have been opportunities for IAFF and MFC to interact. Again though, the
- record does not set forth any facts to suggest that Tyle or anyone else associated with IAFF
- 12 engaged in conduct with MFC or Goel that satisfied the request or suggestion, material
- involvement or substantial discussion conduct standards.
- 14 Finally, as noted *supra*, it appears that IAFF and MFC used a common vendor, One Step,
- 15 to produce mailings. As noted, IAFF used One Step for its initial independent expenditures,
- reporting payments to it for printing and mailings distributed on January 23 and February 5,
- 17 2014.<sup>54</sup> MFC reported a payment to One Step for printing and postage on January 11, 2014,
- 18 although it began carrying a debt to One Step beginning in the 2013 Year End Report and used
- 19 the vendor throughout the campaign. 55 Assuming these payments were for the production of

See MUR 6783 Compl. at Ex. B.

For its subsequent independent expenditure flyers distributed later in February and March 2014, IAFF used a consultant named Brad Goodman. See IAFF 1E Amended April Quarterly Report (Apr. 18, 2014).

MFC made earlier payments to One Step for printing on November 6 and December 15, 2013, and for campaign t-shirts on December 15, 2013.

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MURs 6783 and 6791 (Manju for Congress/Indian Americans for Freedom) First General Counsel's Report Page 16

- 1 some or all of the IAFF and MFC mailings at issue and the common vendor conduct standard at
- 2 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(d)(4) is met, <sup>56</sup> though, Commission regulations still require that one of the
- 3 Section 109.21(d)(1) through (3) conduct standards must be satisfied to conclude that Goel or
- 4 MFC accepted an in-kind coordinated contribution. It is possible that One Step could have
- 5 served as a conduit through which Goel or MFC requested or suggested that IAFF produce the
- 6 mailings, or through which IAFF and MFC engaged in substantial discussions about the content
- 7 of the mailers or through which Goel or MFC was materially involved in decisions about the
- 8 production or distribution of the mailings. Again, however, there is no information from which
- 9 to infer that is the case.

Accordingly, we recommend that the Commission find no reason to believe that Manju for Congress or Manju Goel accepted a prohibited or excessive in-kind contribution in the form of coordinated mailings in violation of 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(f) and 30118(a) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(f) and 441b(a)) or that MFC failed to report them in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 434(b)).

C. There is No Reason to Believe that IAFF Made In-Kind Contributions to MFC By Paying for Office Space and Other Services (MUR 6783)

The Complaint alleges that IAFF or Kumar (directly or through his companies) made, and MFC accepted and failed to report, a number of excessive or prohibited in-kind contributions.<sup>57</sup> We address each specific allegation in turn.

First, the MUR 6783 Complaint alleges, based on attached documentation, that MFC operates out of the same offices as IAFF and companies owned and operated by Kumar, yet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> See 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(d)(4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> MUR 6783 Compl. at 2-4.

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MURs 6783 and 6791 (Manju for Congress/Indian Americans for Freedom)
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Page 17

- failed to disclose the receipt of any in-kind contribution for office space from any of them. The
- 2 available information, however, indicates that MFC paid at least \$1,050 per month in rent to
- 3 Kumar's company, Autotech Technologies, LP, from October 2013 through March 2014, and
- 4 disclosed that amount on its disclosure reports. 58 Moreover, Respondents produced a letter dated
- 5 September 15, 2013, from a certified public accountant determining \$1,050 per month to be the
- 6 fair market value, and we have no information to the contrary.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, it does not appear
- 7 that IAFF or Kumar, directly or through any of his companies, made or that MFC accepted and
- 8 failed to report in-kind contributions in the form of office space.

Second, the Complaint alleges that Kumar or IAFF paid the salaries or other compensation for six MFC campaign staffers and a contractor during the third quarter of 2013.<sup>60</sup> The Complaint apparently bases the allegation on MFC's October Quarterly Report, which discloses the receipt of over \$200,000 in contributions but disbursements of only \$55 while staffers and a contractor were allegedly working for the campaign. MFC responds that it had no paid staff during the third quarter of 2013 because the campaign was "miniscule" during that time, and asserts that it brought on staff and a consultant during the fourth quarter of 2013.<sup>61</sup> Goel filed her Statement of Candidacy on September 18, 2013, and MFC filed its Statement of Organization on the same day, twelve days before the end of the reporting period. MFC's 2013 October Quarterly Report shows that it raised virtually all of its funds in the last six days of the

See IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at Ex. B; MFC Resp. at Ex. C (MFC check payable to Autotech in the amount of \$3,150 dated December 28, 2013, with memo line "Oct-Dec 2013 Rent-Internet for Office"); MFC Resp. at Ex. D (2013 Year End Report at 12 disclosing the \$3,150 payment); 2014 April Quarterly Report at 8 (\$5,100 payment to Autotech for "rent").

See IAFF MUR 6783 Resp. at Ex. B.

<sup>60</sup> MUR 6783 Compl. at 2.

MFC Resp. at 2-3, Exs. D, E (2013 Year End and 2014 Pre-Primary Reports disclosing payments to staff and consultant), Exs. F-J (copies of checks).

MURs 6783 and 6791 (Manju for Congress/Indian Americans for Freedom) First General Counsel's Report Page 18

- 1 quarter, including \$25,000 from the candidate. Complainant provides no information about any
- 2 campaign activity or events during the third quarter other than the campaign kick-off at the
- 3 September 8, 2013, local Republican party picnic, known as the Northwest Suburban Republican
- 4 Family Picnic ("NW Picnic"), and we are aware of none. These facts tend to support MFC's
- 5 assertion that the campaign was a minimal operation at this point with little need for paid
- 6 assistance. Under these circumstances, it does not appear that Kumar or IAFF made and MFC
- 7 accepted and failed to report in-kind contributions in the form payments for staff salaries or
- 8 vendor services during the 2013 October Quarterly reporting period.
  - Third, the Complaint alleges that Kumar personally paid to bus Goel supporters to the
- 10 NW Picnic.<sup>62</sup> The allegation appears to rest only on Kumar's involvement with the event.
- Neither Response addresses the allegation. A state committee bearing the same name as the NW
- 12 Picnic, formed to operate the picnic, is registered with the Illinois State Board of Elections and
- disclosed a \$390 payment on September 8, 2013, for a shuttle bus for the event. 63 Accordingly,
- it appears there was no in-kind contribution to MFC here.
- Finally, the Complaint alleges that MFC failed to disclose the value of legal services
- provided by Kumar's personal attorney to represent Goel in a State Board of Elections hearing
- 17 challenging her nominating petitions.<sup>64</sup> MFC acknowledges that Kumar's personal counsel
- 18 provided legal services in connection with the matter, but asserts that the fee arrangements for
- 19 the attorney's services are "outside the jurisdiction of the [Act]." The Commission has

<sup>62 ·</sup> MUR 6783 Compl. at 3.

See Illinois State Board of Elections website, <a href="http://www.elections.il.gov/CampaignDisclosure/CommitteeDetail.aspx?id=25515">http://www.elections.il.gov/CampaignDisclosure/CommitteeDetail.aspx?id=25515</a>.

<sup>64</sup> MUR 6783 Compl at 4.

MFC Resp. at 2.

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MURs 6783 and 6791 (Manju for Congress/Indian Americans for Freedom) First General Counsel's Report Page 19

- determined that funds raised or spent by an entity other than a political committee to defray legal
- 2 fees incurred by a candidate in defending a nominating petition challenge are not contributions or
- 3 expenditures under the Act. Advisory Op. 1996-39 (Heintz for Congress). It follows then, that
- 4 the provision of any in-kind legal services to represent Goel in the petition challenge is not an in-
- 5 kind contribution to MFC.

In view of the above, we recommend that the Commission find no reason to believe that IAFF or Kumar violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30118(a) or 30116(a)(1)(A) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441b(a) and 441a(a)(1)(A)) by making prohibited or excessive in-kind contributions to MFC or that MFC violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30118(a), 30116(f) or 30104(b) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441b(a), 441a(f) and 434(b)) by accepting and failing to disclose the receipt of office space, payments of staff and contractor salaries, bus travel, or legal services.

D. The Commission Should Dismiss With Caution the Allegation that IAFF Failed to Timely Disclose Independent Expenditures (MUR 6791)

The Complaint alleges that IAFF untimely filed a 48-Hour Notice disclosing \$40,501 that it spent to print and mail communications supporting Goel that were distributed on January 23, 2014 (\$9,891.00) and February 5, 2014 (\$30,610.00). 66 See 52 U.S.C. § 30104(g)(2) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 434(g)(2)). The Notice also discloses a \$100,000 contribution from Vikram Kumar that financed the mailings. IAFF admits that it filed the Notice three business days late because it mailed the Notice to the Commission rather than electronically filing it. It emphasizes that it filed timely each of its other IE Reports. 67 Because the Notice was filed only three days late and

<sup>66</sup> MUR 6791 Compl. at 1, Ex. D.

IAFF MUR 6791 Resp. at 1-2. We note that IAFF failed to include these expenditures in its 2014 April Quarterly Report and still has not filed the Notice electronically despite a letter from RAD advising IAFF that it must do so to satisfy its reporting obligation under 11 C.F.R. § 104.18 or be deemed a non-filer. Letter to IAFF from Kristin Roser, Chief, Reports Analysis Division Compliance Branch (May 14, 2014).

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- filed well before the March 18, 2014, primary election, we recommend that the Commission
- 2 dismiss the allegation but caution IAFF.<sup>68</sup>

### E. There is Reason to Believe that IAFF Failed to Comply with Disclaimer Requirements as to Some of Its Mailings (MUR 6791)

The Complaint alleges that six IAFF mailings contain inadequate disclaimers because they fail to satisfy the provisions of the Commission regulations requiring that disclaimers be set apart from the rest of the communication in a printed box, have a reasonable degree of color contrast between the background and printed statement, and be of a sufficient size to be clearly readable. <sup>69</sup> IAFF asserts that the disclaimers on the mailings satisfy the regulations. <sup>70</sup> The disclaimers on four of the mailings appear to substantially comply with the disclaimer provisions in that they are of sufficient size to be clearly readable, are set apart from the rest of the communication, albeit not in a printed box, and the printed statements are in a contrasting color from the background. <sup>71</sup> By contrast, the disclaimers on the other two mailings, advocating Kafeish's defeat, appear to be barely readable. <sup>72</sup> The copies of these mailings are poor quality photographs, however, which make readability difficult to definitively assess. We recommend, therefore, that the Commission find reason to believe that IAFF violated 52 U.S.C. § 30120(c) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 441d(c)) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(c)) with respect to the two mailings so that we can assess whether they substantially comply with the Act's disclaimer requirements.

See MUR 5790 (Bob Corker for Senate) (Commission dismissed matter with admonition to Committee for filing one day late 48-Hour Notices for contributions totaling \$33,700).

<sup>69</sup> MUR 6791 Compl. at 2, Ex. C. See 52 U.S.C. § 30120(c) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 441d(c)) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(c).

IAFF MUR 6791 Resp. at 2.

See MUR 6791 Compl. Ex. C (Where's Larry, Best Reagan Conservative (Gingrich Endorsement), Larry Kaifesh's Immigration Plan, and Best Reagan Conservative (Republican Leaders Endorsement).

See id. (Virginia Resident Larry Kaifesh and Why Would Virginia Resident Larry Kaifesh Run for Congress in Illinois).

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### MURs 6783 and 6791 (Manju for Congress/Indian Americans for Freedom) First General Counsel's Report

### IV. **INVESTIGATION**

3 IAFF reported \$172,501 in independent expenditure mailings and flyers. We propose a

- 4 limited investigation to determine the cost of the IAFF mailings that constitute republished
- 5 campaign materials and to obtain copies of the IAFF mailings that appear to have inadequate
- 6 disclaimers to assess whether they substantially comply with the disclaimer provisions. We will
- 7 seek to conduct the investigation through voluntary means, but recommend that the Commission
- 8 authorize the use of compulsory process as necessary.

### ٧. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **MUR 6783**

- 1. Find reason to believe that Indian Americans for Freedom, NFPC, violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A) or 30118(a) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(a)(1)(A) and 441b(a)) by making excessive or prohibited in-kind contributions to Manju for Congress, Inc. as a result of republishing campaign materials.
- 2. Find no reason to believe that Manju for Congress, Inc., and Rajeev Goel in his official capacity as treasurer or Manju Goel violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(f) or 30118(a) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(f) and 441b(a)) by knowingly accepting excessive or prohibited in-kind contributions in the form of coordinated mailings.
- 3. Find no reason to believe that Manju Goel for Congress, Inc., and Rajeev Goel in his official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30104(b) (formerly 2 U.S.C. § 434(b)) by failing to report in-kind contributions in the form of coordinated mailings.
- 4. Find no reason to believe that Indian Americans for Freedom, NFPC, or Shalabh Kumar violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A) or 30118(a) (formerly 2 U.S.C.§§ 441a(a)(1)(A) and 441b(a)) by making excessive or prohibited in-kind contributions to Manju for Congress, Inc., in the form of office space and payments of staff and contractor salaries, bus travel, or legal services.
- 5. Find no reason to believe that Manju for Congress, Inc., and Rajeev Goel in his official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(f), 30118(a) or § 30104(b) (formerly 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(f), 441b(a), and 434(b)) by accepting and failing to report excessive or prohibited in-kind contributions in the form of office space and payments of staff salaries and contractor salaries, bus travel, or legal services.

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MURs 6783 and 6791 (Manju for Congress/Indian Americans for Freedom)

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We Deserve Better!! 

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Send Manju Goel to Congress from IL District 8!!

Photo appears on MFC-

Larry is temporarily

Facts Show...

here in Illinois..

Let's make sure that he stays that way!

Whereis Lamy Minois Lamy.com.\* Site is

created website

campaign website.

linked to on MFC

ATTACHMENT 1

## Where's Larry? Just passing through?

- · Away from Illinois for more than 10 years?
- · How many years in Hollywood?
- 6 months lease ending 3.31.2014?
  - · Violating Illinois residency law?



Text and font is identical to MFC mailing

Republican Manju Goel.

Best Conservative Candidate to Retire Tammy Duckworth from Congress

appears on MFC website home page.

Photo (cropped) Manju Goel Will ...

- Champion Freedom and Limited Government
  - Champion Personal Responsibility
- Champion Common-sense Neusehold Fiscal Electpline in Waithington, DC

Gröwigit Party, Sring 20K+ new voter
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**Rock Island, IL** mailing

**VOTE** March

11191

Republican Manju Goe

In the words of Speaker Newt Gindring describing Mark

- \* Health care Efficiency Expert to untangle & end Obamacare.
- \* Living embodiment of hard work and commitment to community & family.
- \* Conservative Leader who will WIN US elections and advance our principles.

Photo appears on MFC website with

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Same font as

MFC mailer

"I want to see Manju Goel in Congress"

Speaker Newt Gingrich

Best Rezgan Conservative for IL 8 **Puckworth from Congress** to Retire Tamin.

Flip of photo that appears on MFC website home

page.

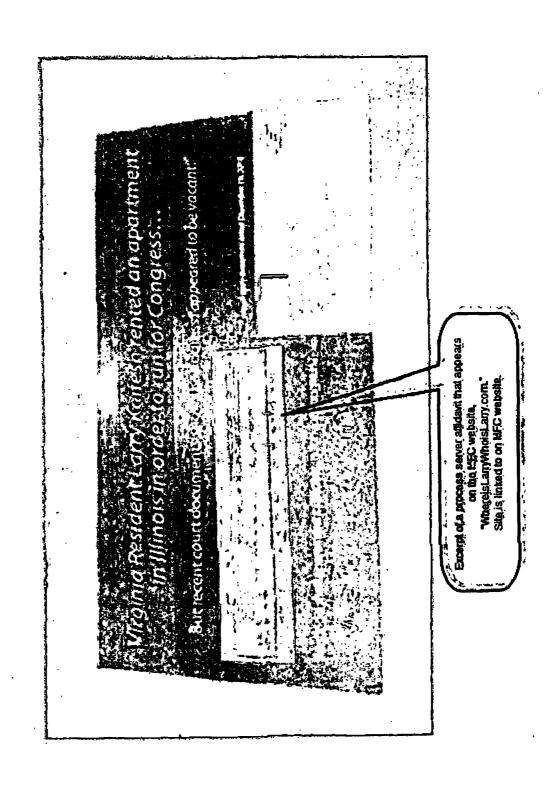
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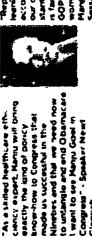
ATTACHMENT 1 Page 6

permit used for MFC appears on MFC website home Same US Postal Rock Island, IL" Same font as Flip photo that MFC mailer Standard US Postage "Presorted Permit 59 page. mailing Conservative for IL 8 **Sworth from Congress** VOTE March Photo appears on MFC website. こことはないますがいないとはないまで、これではないからは i Section : Same Witham S Anderson Republican Manju Goel to Retire Tammy \* Conservative Leader who will WIN US In the words of Speaker Newt Gingnich, describing Manju Living embodiment of hard work and elections and advance our principles. commitment to community & family. Best Reaga "I want to see Manju Goel \* Health care Efficiency Expert to untangle & end Obamacare. P.O. Roy 6421 T. C. Carle Shouses P.C. 126 one della d'elementary bealth an WIND LETS RING & DELLEN in Congress" Speaker Newt Gingrich endanci Arrepresens I or I rendava 198 Photo on MFC website with indorsement Also the P.O. Box for MFC Gingrich

## Here is what top national and local Republican leaders say about Manju Goel...

Gingrich & Walsh

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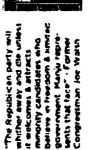
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letter on MFC website



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### 204 IL 8, to Retire Tammy Duckworth Rock-Solid Reagan Conservative

Government Spending, Smaller and More Efficient Government, and Living embodiment of Personal Responsibility and Fiscal Discipline - Small Businesswomen who believes in Lower Taxes, Reduced Strong National Defence

press release on

Excerpt of Tottlen

endorsement appearing in MFC website.

> Manju will bring Common-Sense Solutions & Fiscal Discipline to Washingon DC

is on MFC (caddoca) Photo

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tanju will Grow our Party, Bring 20K+ new votersland Win Elections for a change!

Fag line from MFC mailer.

VOTE

ATTACHMENT 1

MEC MAILING \$1 - MUR 6783 ONLY

# Republican Manju Goel.

Best Consensitive Caudidate to

Manju Goel will ...

· Champion Freedom and Limited Government

Champion Personal Responsibility

Show our Party Bring 20th List victors Champion Common-sense Household Fiscal Discipline in Washington, DC

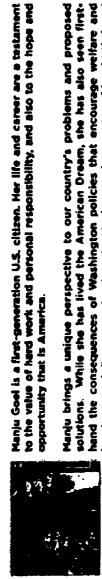


Richard Crostey

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ATTACHMENT 1

## Manju Goel. The Best Republican to Grow the Party, Bring 20K+ New Voters and Retake the 8th Congressional District of Illinois.



Mathemal Leaders of by Jos Welsh & Top Senia Goef enderse Reputblican Party



Manju brings a unique perspective to our country's problems and proposed solutions. While she has lived the American Oream, she has also seen firsthand the consequences of Washington policies that encourage welfare and handouts and discourage hard work. Manju saw the country of her birth faced near bankruptcy in 1991 because of the failed policies of big government, high taxes and massive regulations. opportunity that is America.

Ritt generation by an American

Mrt u Gar.

As a first generation indian American, Manju is uniquely qualified to broaden our base, grow our party and retake Illinois' 8th District. Mith almost twom promises

for common-sense fiscal solutions that ensure America As our next Congresswoman, Manju will work tirefessly get back on the right track.

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